

Remarks

The Applicants note with appreciation the withdrawal of the previous rejection.

The Applicants have amended Claim 20 to place it into better form for allowance by employing clarifying language in place of the word “atop”.

The Applicants acknowledge the rejection of Claims 1-20 under 35 U.S.C. §102 as being anticipated by either Laughlin or Nichols. The Applicants respectfully submit that all of the claims are patentable over both of Laughlin and Nichols for the reasons set forth in detail below.

The Applicants first invite the Examiner’s attention to Claim 1 and the specific language that recites that the porous plate spans across at least one of the dividers. This concept is illustrated by the attached copy of the Applicants’ Fig. 3 wherein the at least one porous plate is shown in red and the dividers are shown in blue. It can therefore readily be seen that the red porous plate spans across the dividers.

The Applicants then invite the Examiner’s attention to Claim 11 which recites that there is a plurality of partitions mounted on top of the porous plates. Again, the Applicants invite the Examiner’s attention to the Applicants’ Fig. 3 wherein the porous plate is shown in red and the partitions are shown in green. Those partitions are mounted on top of the porous plates.

Finally, the Applicants invite the Examiner’s attention to Claim 20 wherein it recites the step of securing a plurality of partitions on top of at least one porous plate. The Applicants again invite the Examiner’s attention to the Applicants’ Fig. 3 wherein the green partitions are shown as being on top of the red porous plate.

The above described language from independent Claims 1, 11 and 20 is sharply contrasted to the structures shown in Laughlin and Nichols. First, the Applicants invite the Examiner’s attention to Fig. 3 of Laughlin, which the Examiner helpfully referred to in the rejection. It can be seen that

the porous plate of Fig. 3 of Laughlin does not span across at least one of the dividers. Instead, the dividers shown in blue actually divide the porous plate shown in red into separate pieces, therefore making it inherently impossible for the porous plate to span across the dividers. Similarly, the Applicants' Claims 11 and 20 call for the partitions to be mounted on top of the porous plates. This is not the case in Laughlin as shown in Fig. 3 of Laughlin wherein the partitions are dividers that separate the porous plate into various porous plates and the plurality of partitions are not mounted on the porous plates. Instead, the porous plates are suspended between the plurality of partitions. Therefore Laughlin fails to disclose, either expressly or implicitly, structure that is recited in each of independent Claims 1, 11 and 20. Accordingly, Laughlin is inapplicable.

Nichols suffers essentially the same fatal deficiency. This can be seen generally by reference to Fig. 1 of Nichols and more particularly in Figs. 2 and 3 of Nichols. The porous plates 30 are suspended between the dividers 18A and 18B as shown, for example, in Figs. 2 and 3. The Applicants enclose a copy of Fig. 2 of Nichols wherein the porous plates 30 are shown in red and the dividers 18 are shown in blue. Accordingly, that structure does not encompass the language of Claim 1 which recites that the porous plate spans across at least one of the dividers and does not encompass the language from Claims 11 and 20 wherein the plurality of partitions are mounted on top of the porous plates. This is inherently impossible in the Nichols disclosure because the dividers 18A and 18B separate the porous plates into a plurality of porous plates that are suspended between the dividers. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully submit that Nichols is also inapplicable. Moreover, the Applicants note that the structures shown in Figs. 1 to 3 of Nichols describe the prior art as known to Nichols. One skilled in the art would therefore not look to such structure. Withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 1-20 based on Laughlin and Nichols is accordingly respectfully requested.

In light of the foregoing, the Applicants respectfully submit that the entire Application is now in condition for allowance, which is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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